

Big break in Kowalski case

Judge set to order Sharon Kowalski moved to rehabilitation facility after medical evaluators submit findings. Chances for Karen Thompson to visit her lover look good.

By Jennie McKnight

DULUTH, Minn. — In a stunning development that appears to have profound ramifications in the case of disabled lesbian Sharon Kowalski, the three court-appointed doctors charged with evaluating Kowalski's condition submitted findings indicating she is able to express her wishes. Kowalski's father, Donald, who was awarded unrestricted legal guardianship of his daughter in 1985, has argued the brain damage she suffered as a result of an accident caused by a drunk driver has rendered her "helpless."

"The report validates everything I've said all along — that Sharon should have been receiving much higher quality rehabilitation this entire time and that she can clearly understand and express her wishes," said Karen Thompson, Kowalski's lover who has been prevented from seeing her since Donald Kowalski was, awarded unrestricted guardianship. Thompson told GCN she felt very "split" about the results of the evaluation. "I'm so excited because the results are better than I ever dared expect, but I'm also as angry as I've ever been — at a system that has allowed this to happen. I'm angry at the cost we've had to pay for this victory. Sharon has been limited because she has not received the care she should have."

Thompson said part of her anger was directed at Robert Campbell, the presiding judge in the case to determine Kowalski's competency. Campbell, whose order in February finally led to Kowalski's testing in September of this year, met with Kowalski's

parents, Thompson, and Kowalski's courtappointed attorney Dec. 12 to discuss the report, but failed to make the evaluation public. Instead, citing Kowalski's right to retain the privacy of her medical records, Campbell released a coverletter written by one of the three doctors involved in the evaluation. The document released by Campbell, according to Thompson, is "to-tally lukewarm" compared to the report

Thompson said Campbell gave her a copy of the report but told her not to quote from it or to give it to the press. But Thompson said her lawyer advised her that she is not prevented from discussing her interpretation of the report with the press. "I have read and digested the material in the report ... and I think it shows how clearly a woman has been kept in an institution against her will," said Thompson.

Campbell told GCN he would not comment on the contents of the report, but said he would issue a written order "within the next few days" that would outline what would happen next to Kowalski. He said sometime after the holidays Kowalski will be temporarily moved to "an appropriate rehabilitation facility that is capable of working with brain-damaged people." According to the statement released by Campbell, the evaluators recommend that "Kowalski be placed in a long-term rehabilitation facility to look particularly at

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Activists hang up on 'Midnight Caller'

TV episode slammed for its depiction of an "irresponsible and promiscuous" bisexual "AIDS carrier"

BOSTON — A coalition of angry activists demonstrated at local television station WBZ Dec. 13 to protest the station's airing of a show that depicts a bisexual man who engages in unsafe sex without informing his partners that he has AIDS. A flier distributed by activists from the Bisexual Committee Engaged in Politics (BiCEP), Rock Against Sexism, and MASS ACT OUT said that the episode of Midnight Caller "presents a sensationalized portrayal of bisexuals, gays, and people with AIDS. It reinforces the stereotype of the PWA as a danger to society." Gay activists nationwide expressed fears that the portrayal of the bisexual character with AIDS ("Mike Barnes") will perpetuate misinformation and incite anti-gay violence.

The episode depicts Barnes as having been infected with HIV from his gay lover. Barnes, repeatedly referred to as an "AIDS carrier," is portrayed as a promiscuous charmer who knowingly infects his sex partners without remorse. Barnes only relents after intervention from the show's straight protagonist, an ex-cop turned radio show host, who learns that his former girlfriend is pregnant and HIV-antibody positive after a fling with Barnes.

Speaking with protesters and journalists in front of WBZ's studios, Kim Harbin, WBZ's Public Communications Director, claimed that some of the episode's characters with AIDS are quite sympathetic.



Labor dispute guts SF 'Sentinel' staff

Angry workers who walked out vow to start new, collectively run rag

By Miranda Kolbe

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco Sentinel, a gay community weekly paper, went through a major upheaval recently when the majority of the staff walked out Nov. 9 — the day before the paper was to go

According to several ex-Sentinel employees and its publisher, Ray Chalker, the walkout was the result of disputes between the publisher and staff over labor policies and editorial decisions.

"[The staff] had asked Chalker for health benefits several times," said John Frank, an ex-Sentinel employee. "He said he understood the importance of health insurance to us, and would give it to us as soon as possible, but it wasn't happening," said Frank.

According to several other employees who walked out, unfulfilled promises had been a pattern at the paper for several years. "Previous owners had promised us health benefits too, but they never came through and we were tired of waiting," said Cathy Cockrell. In addition, the staff had not received cost-of-living increases during the

Political differences arose between the publisher and the staff over endorsements of political candidates for the November election. Chalker, a Republican, was reportedly not happy with the staff's decision to endorse Pat Norman, a progressive Black lesbian who was running for a seat on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors. Chalker had wanted to endorse Bruce Lilienthal, a straight white man, instead. Additionally, although the staff had endorsed Democratic incumbent Milton Marks for state Senate, Chalker put a sign for the Republican candidate, Carol Marshall, in the window at the Sentinel's office.

The conflicts came to a head during the weekend of Nov. 5-6, when several staff members said they found out Chalker was Continued on page 12 planning to fire News Editor Tim Taylor and

that he was hunting for a replacement for Taylor. On Monday evening, the staff drafted a letter to Chalker, stating that they would not put out another issue of the paper until Chalker assured the staff that he would not fire Taylor. In addition, the staff asked for an immediate meeting with Chalker and an independent arbitrator to discuss their various grievances. Chalker said, "I had decided I was going to get my own editor — one who wasn't so much kissing ass with the politicians, but who was more community-based."

They [the staff] were just playing a power trip, and my lawyer said, 'If you give in, you're going to lose it, because they're just going to do it again,' "Chalker commented. Consequently, Chalker refused to discuss the staff's grievances with anyone but his own lawyer as arbitrator.

Chalker said that because he had not yet signed the papers which officially made him the owner of the Sentinel, he was not in a position to offer the staff any additional benefits or wages. In a recent editorial, Chalker described the staff who walked out as "the rats that have deserted a ship that was sinking.

Since the walkout, Chalker said, the paper's fortunes have improved. "We're putting out a three-color paper now, the only one in the city. Our subscriptions have gone up and so has our advertising. In fact, we're having another salesperson. We're doing real well.

Additionally, Chalker said he has been able to offer the current staff health insurance and higher wages than previous Sentinel employees. "[The old staff] thought they were going to get everybody to back them in the community. But nobody backed them, and now they're out of a job," Chalker added.

Chalker said he hopes the Sentinel will become more community-based now, and Continued on page 6

Quote of the week

"I think I'm going to get in."

— Karen Thompson, on her chances of visiting her disabled lover Sharon Kowalski, whom she has been prevented from seeing since Kowalski's father was granted guardianship of his daughter in 1985. (See story, page 1.)

Northeastern dykes to meet

NEW YORK — Lesbians in the Northeast region of the U.S. will meet in early January as part of a national effort to organize the Lesbian Agenda Conference, tentatively scheduled for fall of 1989.

Plans for the national gathering of dykes grew out of an ad hoc meeting held in Washington D.C. in September of this year. The group put forth some recommendations for the conference and suggested that six regional organizational meetings be held prior to the national planning meeting which will take place in Durham/Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on March 4-5, 1989.

Organizers who have participated so far recommended that the conference: be by, for and about lesbians; be planned according to feminist principles and process; represent our diversity and welcome all lesbians. According to the flyer announcing the Northeast Region meeting, "Our greatest strength is our diversity. Lesbians of every race, class, religion, ability and ethnicity must be involved in all aspects of planning the conference. Whether you are a courageous lesbian who deals with local, state or national governmental bodies, an amazon challenging the might of the world's militaries or the average dyke who deals with varying degrees of homophobia while living the reality of loving women, all our voices must combine to form a community."

Dykes from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. are encouraged to attend the Northeast Region organizing meeting. Northeastern lesbians and lesbians from other parts of the country who would like more information about the regional organizing efforts should write to: National Lesbian Conference, P.O. Box 3057, Albany, NY 12203; or call Libby Post (518) 463-3522 or Michelle Crone (518) 463-1051.

□ Jennie McKnight

Speaking tour for Simon Nkoli planned

TORONTO, Canada — The Simon Nkoli Anti-Apartheid Committee (SNAAC) is planning to bring the recently-acquitted activist to Canada and possibly the United States for a speaking tour. Nkoli, an openlygay Black South African who was one of the defendants in the Delmas Treason Trial, has been an anti-apartheid and gay activist for several years. (See GCN, Nov. 27, 1988)

SNAAC said the speaking tour will be "an important opportunity to bring people together to hear first-hand accounts of the situation in Southern Africa and to mobilize support for the anti-apartheid movement." The tour is tentatively planned for June of 1989. For more information about the tour, or to make a contribution to cover the travel expenses, write to SNAAC at Box 65, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2L4, Canada.

☐ Jennie McKnight

Dallas anti-racism group

DALLAS — A recently-formed group organized to combat racial discrimination in Dallas gay bars has already met with some success. According to their newsletter, Gays United Against Racial Discrimination (GUARD) has pressured one bar, the Marquee, to stop asking Black and Latino patrons for more pieces of identification than white bar-goers.

According the the GUARD newsletter, the group held pickets at the Marquee and distributed flyers urging people who have

experienced discrimination to contact the Texas attorney general. The local chapter of Men of All Colors Together participated in the successful picket.

To contact GUARD, write to P.O. Box 191041, Dallas, TX 75219.

☐ Jennie McKnight

Supremes uphold gay firing at Security Agency

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Dec. 6 that the National Security Agency (NSA) did not violate the rights of John Doe, a gay employee, when it fired him on national security grounds without giving him the chance to challenge the action at a hearing. The court voted unanimously to overturn a lower court's decision that Doe was entitled to a full civil service and administrative hearing to challenge his dismissal.

Doe had been employed with the ultrasecret organization for 16 years at the time of his dismissal in 1982. The NSA revoked Doe's security clearance after he told NSA officials he had engaged in homosexual conduct with citizens of foreign countries. After revoking Doe's clearance, the agency fired him, since having clearance is a prerequisite for employment at NSA. Doe argued that a 1950 law provides procedural protections for NSA employees and that he should have been entitled to a hearing before being fired. According to The New York Times, the Supreme Court ruling decided the statutory authority of NSA to fire Doe and did not address "the broader question of gay rights." ☐ Jennie McKnight

Keep that powdered milk coming!

BOSTON — Many thanks to the GCN readers who have responded to the call for help for Nicaraguan victims of Hurricane Joan. Our container for powdered milk has been bulging!

For those who missed the original announcement, local activists have organized the Quezalguaque Sister City Hurricane Relief Project to ship emergency relief items to Nicaragua, which has been denied aid by the U.S. government. GCN's offices at 62 Berkeley Street are a drop point for donations. Powdered milk is suggested, although monetary donations and other emergency relief items will be accepted until Jan. 7, 1988.

For more information about the Project, call (617) 277-7867.

☐ Jennie McKnight

Will gay lifestyle cease to be 'viable alternative' in California?

SAN FRANCISCO — California gay and lesbian educators are organizing to stop proposed state legislation that would prohibit schools from encouraging homosexuality as a viable lifestyle alternative, according to the *Bay Area Reporter*.

Sponsored by Assemblyman Phil Wyman, the bill is part of Rev. Lou Sheldon and the Traditional Values Coalition's (TVC) national campaign to Stop Homosexual Advocacy in Public Education (SHAPE). According to TVC, they have "fired the first round of open warfare...to stop [homosexuality] before it spreads throughout the nation like cancer." Sheldon refers to California as the "beachhead" where the battle must begin, the Reporter said. Letters to potential supporters of SHAPE claim gay men are pedophiles trying to lure boys into their lifestyle.

Robert Birle, a chair of the Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators (BANGLE), said, "BANGLE is very angry that we have to respond to this declaration of warfare." This attack directly impacts the kind of service BANGLE has struggled to obtain for over three years, Birle told the Reporter. The bill would do away with such programs as Community United Against Violence's speakers bureau in San Francisco, and Virginia Uribe's Project 10, a counseling program for gay and lesbian high



Virginia Uribe, director of Project 10

school students in Los Angeles. It could also result in the removal from school libraries of literature that contains gay-positive characters or gay historical references of any kind, Birle said.

In addition to building opposition to the legislation through protests, BANGLE is advocating a letter-writing campaign in protest of the Wyman bill. Letters can be sent to the Education Committee, State Capitol, Room 311, Sacramento, CA 95814.

☐ John Dooley

Surviving and Thriving II

NEW YORK — The People With AIDS Coalition of New York has produced a second volume of the widely-distributed resource book by and for people with AIDS, Surviving and Thriving with AIDS. The new book, Surviving and Thriving With AIDS Volume Two — Collected Wisdom, contains a section on treatment options that includes first-hand accounts of drug treatments and holistic approaches.

According to Michael Callen, editor of both volumes, the second volume also includes much material by and about women and A1DS and people of color with AIDS. It also contains a section about AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) and H1V antibody positivity.

Volume one, called Surviving and Thriving With AIDS: Hints for the Newly Diagnosed, will also be reprinted for the second time, according to the PWA Coalition. Originally published in summer of 1987, volume one has been distributed to over 20,000 people.

"The two books are meant to be read together, and in order," said Callen. "Hints is still essential reading for the newly diagnosed. Collected Wisdom expands upon the information and ideas contained in Hints. It's an anthology of our attempts to cope with AIDS. It's a slice of the lives which captures what it is like to live with AIDS in America in the late 1980s."

Both books are offered free to people with A1DS and ARC. Others can purchase either book by mail order from the PWA Coalition. Volume two costs \$20, volume one, \$10. Contact the PWA Coalition at 31 West 26th St., New York, NY 10010; or call (212) 532-0292.

☐ Jennie McKnight

ACT UP/NY addresses alternative/holistic treatments

NEW YORK - "ACT UP/New York's focus solely on pharmaceutical solutions to the A1DS crisis has been too limited. It is important to look beyond these conventional treatments. Growing evidence suggests that only by broadening treatment strategies to include holistic and alternative treatments will a long-term solution to AIDS be found," Bob Lederer told GCN recently. Joined by a group of holistic healers, PWAs involved in nonconventional health care, and other interested ACT UP members, Lederer, an AIDS activist and investigative journalist currently researching the AIDSsyphilis link, has formed ACT UP/NY's newest offshoot, the Alternative and Holistic Treatments Subcommittee.

The committee investigates holistic treatments, which are non-pharmaceutical therapies like herbs, vitamins, and acupuncture, as well as alternative, generally ignored pharamaceutical treatments for AIDS (penicillin and the typhoid vaccine, for example.) Lederer said that the committee, which he hopes will inspire similar groups at other ACT UPs nationwide, will work to provide information on nonconventional AIDS treatments. It will also attempt to address the obstacles that currently exist for people trying to obtain alternative treatments, using familiar ACT UP-style direct action tactics.

At the top of the committee's agenda is the American Medical Association, which Lederer says severely restricts the practice of accupuncture, herbal medicine and homeopathy for various political and economic reasons. Other potential targets will be insurance companies, which provide at best very limited coverage for the expense of holistic health care. ACT UP chapters across the country have already zeroed in on some insurance companies for refusing to cover the expense of more traditional, but as yet experimental, drug treatment for AIDS, like aerosoloized pentamadine.

☐ Andrew Miller

Boston bikers hold sober soiree

BOSTON — The Old Cambridge Baptist Church was hopping during the annual Moving Violations fundraising dance party held Dec. 10. The local lesbian biker club set a precedant at this soiree DJed by "Claire" of Amethyst women fame, by declaring the event sober and drug free.

Floating about the dance floor or chatting in intimate groupings were women (and couples) as diverse as the motorcycle membership itself. Fems, butches (leather and otherwise) and women of other persuasions mingled about or munched on the goodies. Everywhere were women enjoying women. Although historically open to men, few were to be spotted — unless the dim lights (or good drag) deceived. Downstairs, ladies — in kiki dyads or flying solo — lounged in chairs (or each other's arms) while previewing footage of the soon-to-bereleased "1988 Women's Motorcycle Festival" — a video produced by the Boston-based Wisebird Productions.

The club was founded during Boston's 1985 Gay Pride. For the past three years programs committed to ending violence against women have received proceeds from the club's fundraising "runs."

Reflecting on the club's diversity and goals, board member and newsletter coeditor Ingrid Sell said the club "...blow(s) stereotypes, no matter which way you look at it.... People expect a women's motorcycle club to be a bunch of tough drunken slobs hell-bent in destruction ... and yet here we are having a blast sponsoring a chem-tree dance; we hold annual fundraising runs to benefit women's organizations and promote safety at least as much as comraderic ... if not more."

Folks interested in the Moving Violations should contact: MVMC, P.O. Box 217, New Town Branch, Boston, MA 02258.

☐ Wickie Stamps





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Martha Alsup, 38, and Susan Galvin, 40

Therapist couple remembered with love

Compiled by Beth Shapiro

BOSTON - Susan Tekla Galvin was born on April 9, 1948, in Cleveland, Ohio, daughter of Marjorie and the late Harold Galvin. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison with a bachelor's degree in history and later earned a master's in social work from the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis.

Susan spoke Spanish and worked at the Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury, Mass. in 1975. She entered private practice as a psychotherapist in 1976, incorporating and continuing her training in transactional analysis, core energetics, and family systems at the Family Institute of Cambridge. She volunteered with the AIDS Action Committee (AAC), conducting support groups for

Susan was active in the feminist community in Boston, supporting pro-choice advocates and working with the Coalition for Women's Safety, a group that formed in response to the rapes and murders of a number of Roxbury and Dorchester women. She joined the Pledge of Resistance to armed intervention in Nicaragua, and had travelled to Cuba with an early brigade of North Americans.

Susan loved jazz music, reading, and learning about other cultures. Her extensive travels included visiting Guatemala, trekking in the Himalayas with her brother, camping alone on the Napali coast of Hawaii, and vacationing in France and England with Martha. She particularly loved nature and snorkling in the Caribbean.

Martha Marie Alsup was born on July 10, 1950, in Decatur, Illinois, daughter of Helen and the late John Alsup. She earned her bachelor's degree in education from St. Louis University and, later, her master's in social work at Washington University in St.

Martha practiced psychotherapy in St. Louis and New York before going into private practice in Boston in 1979. She pursued additional training in transactional analysis, neurolinguistic programming, core energetics, and family systems at the Family

Institute of Cambridge.

Martha volunteered with Omega — an organization providing support to people affected by life-threatening illness and death - in its Safe Place program for those who have lost someone to suicide. Martha's own near-death in an automobile accident in 1975, and her process of recovery from it, informed her work and life in all respects. Martha practiced Buddhist meditation and was involved and interested in many aspects of spirituality. She did a number of extended meditation retreats at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Mass., including a three-month retreat in 1979. Martha was active in the Nicaraguan Pledge of Resistance and supported AAC, Amnesty International, and other groups involved in world peace and ending world hunger.

Martha loved music, reading, and travelling. She had a great curiosity about the world, and a deep and irrepressible respect for people and for life.

Martha and Susan shared their lives, their home, and their work, co-leading several therapy groups and periodic retreats. They worked with families, couples, groups, and individuals, helping people to come together and heal from childhood abuse and other traumas. They each had their own unique gift for this work, and the courage and commitment to use those gifts well.

Susan is survived by her mother and her brother, Mark; Martha by her mother, tive sisters, and brother. Both are survived by the many clients and friends whose hearts they touched with humor and love.

A memorial service for Martha Alsup and Susan Galvin will be held on Sunday, Dec. 18, at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church at 1151 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. Chanting and meditation 4-4:30 p.m.; music and song 4:45-5:30 p.m.; memorial service 5:30-7 p.m. Contributions can be made in their memory to the Susan Galvin/Martha Alsup Memorial Fund, c/o Haymarket People's Fund, 25 West St., Boston, MA

Santa Cruz anti-rape group loses suit

Members fear that victory by man written up in newsletter will have a chilling effect on women's ability to talk about the "real violence" in their lives

By Elizabeth Baldwin

Santa Cruz Women Against Rape (SCWAR) has staffed a 24-hour crisis line, educated the community about violence against women, and provided emotional support, medical and advocacy services for women who have been assaulted or raped.

For 10 years, the volunteer feminist collective printed an informational newsletter that included descriptions by women of the men who had assaulted or raped them. SCWAR hasn't printed a description list in four years, not since 20-year-old Steve Carney charged the group with defamation, invasion of privacy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Carney also filed suit against Karen Winkler, who in 1984 asked SCWAR to print in its newsletter that Carney and another male co-worker had taken her out after work under false pretenses of friendship, driven her to an abandoned area, and assaulted and attempted to rape her. Winkler, now 24, counter-sued Carney for assault. These suits were settled out of court with an exchange of letters. Winkler never retracted her charges.

On Oct. 13 of this year a seven-man, fivewoman jury ruled that SCWAR had libled the Scotts Valley man and owed him \$7,500 for pain and suffering and \$25,000 in punitive damages. Carney's attorney, David Sabih, accepted the verdict although originally he suggested that Carney sue SCWAR for \$100 million. He said he arrived at this figure by starting with a one, then adding pairs of zeroes for "each pair of eyes in the

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. - For 16 years, group' that saw 'the branding of an innocent man." Sabih asked the jury to send a message to rape crisis centers everywhere that "branding" was intolerable. Carney stated during the trial that he wanted SCWAR to disband.

"For us, the trial has been a mirror reflection of what happens in the criminal justice system to women who have been assaulted." said Jan Shirchild, a member of SCWAR for 8 years and one of two SCWAR members to be subpoenaed by Sabih. SCWAR has filed a motion to request a new trial on grounds that Judge Robert Staniforth made errors that cost SCWAR its

Members of SCWAR said they were initially hopeful that Staniforth would conduct a fair trial. They pointed out that when Sabih referred in chambers to SCWAR as "a group of man-hating lesbians," the judge replied that he would declare an immediate mistrial if the lawyer repeated those words in court. Sabih didn't.

But Staniforth changed other trial rules in midstream, said Shirchild. For starters, after SCWAR had already been established as a "media defendant" with no objection from the plaintiff, the judge disallowed the identification. "We would have run our whole case differently is we'd known he would throw out our definition as a media defendant — which means you're protected by the same rights as other print media," Shirchild explained. Staniforth also prohibited SCWAR from testifying about the

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Mourners at Cambridge Common, Dec. 12

Candlelight rally for Galvin and Alsup addresses violence

Boston community mourns murdered lesbians

By Judy Harris

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Over 500 women and about 20 men participated in a candlelight procession Dec. 12 to protest society's acceptance of violence against women, children, and gay men. The largely lesbian gathering, facing bitterly-cold temperatures, walked solemnly down Massachusetts Avenue from Porter Square to Harvard Square where a rally was held on the Cambridge Common.

The protest — larger than any local Take Back the Night march in recent years — was organized by friends of Martha Alsup and Susan Galvin, a Watertown couple murdered Nov. 28 while vacationing in Anguilla in November. Alsup and Galvin shared a home as well as a psychotherapy practice. They also saw clients in separate one-to-one counseling practices, and both provided support for caregivers of people with AIDS (PWAs).

Jennifer Gilman, a six-year participant in one of Alsup and Galvin's therapy groups, told the crowd about the couple's ability to create "an atmosphere of safety " for clients, and their ability to "show people the way to their own power."

Marcie Hershman, a client of Galvin's, read a poem written by May Sarton when she heard that her friend and colleague, Virginia Woolf, had died.

According to rally organizers, the event was initially planned as a public memorial and a demonstration to protest the Alsup/Galvin murders. But they said they later decided to use the opportunity to call

attention to larger issues of violence.

Black lesbian feminist Beverly Smith asked the crowd, "How do we make sense of this horror? I think it's significant that most of us when we first heard the news assumed that Susan and Martha were murdered because they were lesbians.... Despite the lack of evidence, many of us can't shake that feeling. An unjust society chooses its targets carefully. It makes very clear to all its members who it's acceptable to hate and brutalize.

Anguillan officials have refused to release information from autopsy reports and would not comment on the investigation of the murders.

Sources close to the case, however, told GCN that there is evidence that Alsup and Galvin were both raped at knife point and murdered by Andy Otto, a 17-year-old who was apprehended Nov. 29. Otto has been charged with two counts of murder.

At the rally, Berit Pratt, a friend of the slain couple, said, "We who are here tonight represent a community in grief and in rage. Pratt emphasized that misogyny was at the root of the killings of her friends, regardless of whether the murderer was also aware of their lesbianism. "They were women traveling alone. They lived as we live, travel as we travel, and so the violence of their deaths has violated us all and left us living in fear and in terror," said Pratt.

Pratt, addressing the decision to broaden the focus of the rally, cited several examples Continued on page 6

New York building housing PWA groups

By Andrew Miller

NEW YORK — The official opening of a building housing organizations both run by and dedicated to serving people with AIDS was celebrated Dec. 12 with a brief ribboncutting ceremony and a day-long open house. Organizers of the day's events said that the building, at 31 West 26th Street, near Manhattan's Flower District, was the first in the country to be completely operated by and for people with AIDS. Manhattan Rep. Ted Weiss (D.-N.Y.) and Manhattan Borough President and potential mayoral candidate David Dinkins were among those present for the ceremony.

The five groups housed in the building's 545-7120.

six stories are: The Community Research Initiative (CRI); The People With AIDS Coalition; The People With AIDS (PWA) Health Group; The Living With AIDS Fund (LWAF); and Testing the Limits. CRI conducts clinical drug trials of potential AIDS and ARC treatments, accelerating the process of treatment development and providing increased access to experimental treatments. The three-and-a-half-year-old PWA Coalition provides a wide variety of services, including a food program, a telephone hotline, a monthly newsletter, and an assortment of support groups. The PWA Health Group is a buyer's club that provides access to otherwise unavailable potential AIDS interventions, like dextran sulfate. The Living With AIDS Fund meets the emergency financial needs of PWAs and PWARCs who are either waiting for or not receiving adequate public entitlements. Testing The Limits is a collective of video artists devoted to documenting the AIDS activist movement and people's responses to AIDS. Most of the groups have already been working out of the new building for several

CRI can be reached at (212) 481-1050. The Coalition's phone number is (212) 532-0290; that of the Health Group is (212) 532-0280. LWAF can be reached at (212) 545-7122; Testing the Limits at (212)

COMMUNITY VOICES

Subscription problems?

- or -

They shoot computers, don't they?

Last week the unthinkable happened. GCN's subscription database crashed like a marathon dancer after three weeks of doing the Charleston. A computer virus? No, nothing that trendy. It was more like computer post-nasal drip or computer flatulence. In any case, the darn thing caused some serious delays in the mailing of issue number 22.

Since then we have been busy reconstructing our subscription data from computer back-ups and recent renewal notices, address changes and new subscription forms. We apologize for the delayed mailing (you wouldn't believe how much we would have preferred this whole ordeal had never happened.) If you have any further problems with your GCN delivery please call or write us. Thanks, we knew you'd understand.

"Community Voices" and "Speaking Out" are parts of our efforts to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed in this space. We welcome all contributions except personal attacks. Copies of letters and "Speaking Out" contributions sent elsewhere are printed on a space-available basis. GCN reserves the right to edit letters and "Speaking Out" contributions for length and clarity, in consultation with the author. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership.

Letter and "Speaking Out" contributions must be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Letters can be NO LONGER THAN TWO PAGES. "Speaking Out" contributions can be NO LONGER THAN FOUR PAGES. Send to: Community Voices or Speaking Out, GCN, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

Don't fall into that self-pity trap

Dear GCN:

During the past 4 years I've seen a side of people I would never have believed possible.

I've been a PWA since April of 1984 and have been up and down during this time. When a doctor told me in 1985 I had only 6 months to live I went out and robbed a bank and ended up getting 12 years.

I started my time in the Federal system at Springfield Medical Prison in the AIDS unit. At first I (like all the PWAs) was hated. We were locked in isolation, called almost every name a person could ever think of. I had notes put under my door telling me to die 'AIDS freak'.

When I was moved to Texas, of course everyone was told, and in the mess hall that seats 200 at 4-man tables, even when it was full and people were looking for a place to sit, I would be the only person sitting at my table. I've been here since July 1987 (except for 3 months when I was sick and had to go back to Springfield). Last Christmas the men in my unit got together and had a little party. It was a time when the men came together and tried to make prison a little happier for an hour or so. Well, I was asked not to come because they didn't want me to touch the chips or dip. I spent xmas eve in my room by myself with a coke and a bag of chips and, yes, a few tears of self-pity.

What I'm getting at in my own rambling we play.

It's the sitting around acting like you're going to die that makes other people afraid of us. I'm listed as 'full blown AIDS' but what do they know. They told me in 1985 1 only had 6 months, and then again in 1987 that I wouldn't see xmas. But as long as 1 can still sec some good in people I want to keep fighting for another day. I know if you are at one of the many prisons that still overreact to the whole thing, life can be Hell. But if you can concentrate on making one friend, then others will see and the next one will be easier. You will have set backs,

believe me, but don't fall into that self-pity trap. It will only kill you, and then they have

Some of you will think I'm full of bullshit, but from one PWA to another, it helps to keep trying.

> Jimmy F. Sweatt 17655-009 PO Box 1010 Bastrop, TX 78602

Lesbians and AIDS: the debate goes on

Dear GCN:

We were pleased to note Laurie Sherman's objections to several misleading AIDS-related remarks voiced by JoAnn Loulan ("700 Lesbians Say 'Pussy'," GCN Nov.13-19). However, we wanted to add a few more points as well as add some clarifications to the GCN article.

First, Sherman insists that "virtually all [lesbians with AIDS] contracted it as a result of IV drug use" while adding that "sexual transmission may be possible." The actual number of lesbians with AIDS, ARC or HIV infection is unknown as are routes of infection. Only full-blown AIDS diagnoses are reportable to the Centers of Disease Control (CDC). In addition, women who are lesbian-identified are often reluctant to come out to researchers and may not be asked questions pertaining to sexual behaviors or identity, particularly if they "fit" into one of the "risk groups" categorized by the CDC (i.e. "iv drug abuser"). Because of these and other factors, it is misleading to discount the possibility that lesbians may have contracted HIV infection from other means besides needle sharing.

Second, while alerting readers to the role of IV drug use in the transmission of HIV infection, Sherman would seem to assume that lesbians do not engage in other high risk behaviors, such as allowing semen or blood exposure through unprotected sexual intercourse with men. Loulan and other lesbian therapists note that lesbian-identified women do in fact have sex with men who may be at risk and do so without adequate protection. Some have been inseminated before the HIV antibody test became available in 1985. Further, Iesbian-identified women may have been transfusion recipients or may have not practiced safe sex with transfusion recipients, sexual partners of hemophiliacs (believed to have a high rate of HIV infection due to repeated exposure to blood products prior to the availability of the HIV antibody test) or needle-sharing in-

Third, because Loulan repeatedly refers — incorrectly — to the HIV antibody test as "the AIDS test" it is even less clear to us whether she was referring to HIV positive lesbians when she was talking about "lesbians with AIDS." Of greater concern is the misleading impressions she left with the audience that "the test" could tell a woman if she "had AIDS" and that a negative result means one is "safe,""AIDS-free" and therefore cleared to engage in risky behaviors. In reality the HIV antibody test may fail to detect the presence of antibodies, may yield an otherwise false result and is not synonymous with an ARC or AIDS diagnosis. In discussing testing, Loulan should be advising repeat testing over three to six months at alternative test sites where testing is confidential.

Fourth, in her discussion of safer sex methods, Loulan encouraged the audience to use nonoxynol-9 products on "assholes, cunts," shared dildos, etc. because it "kills the AIDS virus." This advice is both misguided and dangerous. To our knowledge, nonoxynol-9, a spermicidal ingredient found in some lubricants, contraceptive creams and pre-lubricated condoms, has never been tested for its purported HIV killing-power outside the laboratory, that is on human beings. So it is not clear that it works in an anti-HIV strategy. The oral or anal use of it has not been tested and some people may be allergic to it - especially when it is directly applied to sensitive tissues. Latex used with nonoxvnol for sex involving semen is a safer bet. Loulan's suggestion that women apply nonoxynol to dildos they might share rather that urging the much safer and equally easy alternative - use of separate dildos, or dildos covered with condoms — was of great concern to us as well.

JoAnn Loulan has been a leader in dealing with issues around lesbian sexuality with Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

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GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

country way is that through all of this I have kept smiling, saying good morning, and been willing to talk to anybody about AIDS that wants to learn. And after all this time it is beginning to pay off. People are beginning to eat at my table and not worrying about me sweating on the racketball when

humor and comfort. Her lectures and

Sincerely, Judith Krulewitz, Ph.D. Clinical Director

Marea Murray, LCSW Staff Therapist Gay and Lesbian Health Boston, Mass.

Celebrating victory over **Operation Rescue**

Dear *GCN*:

On October 29th, the people of Boston taught Operation Rescue a lesson. More than 3000 people lined Beacon Street to demonstrate that we will fight for reproductive freedom for all women.

The response of Operation Rescue was to leave town. They were not prepared to confront a community united in defense of women's rights.

We began this struggle on October 22, when over 200 committed people braving the cold rain confronted Operation Rescue at their sit-in at the Gynecare clinic in Boston. We made it clear that Operation Rescue was not welcome.

Only when Operation Rescue is not opposed — when they are allowed to set the political ground rules — are they able to pursue their agenda. Our unequivocal responses on October 22nd and 29th were clear statements that we are not going to allow them to trample our rights or dominate the media with their oppressive message.

Holding onto our triumphs will take vigilance and a willingness to once again be very visible in our opposition to the New Right. We have no doubt that it was our visibility in large numbers that forced Operation Rescue to change their plans.

We celebrate this victory against the New Right, but we are not complacent. On October 29th, Operation Rescue did not fold up their tents and fade into the night. They went to Providence, Rhode Island, where they created havoc and closed down a women's clinic for that day. The defeat of Operation Rescue in Boston is one battle in a very much larger war.

Operation Rescue is the most recent manifestation of the political right wing which has been developing for the last twenty years and came into prominence with the Reagan administration in 1980. The organized progressive movement must take the initiative to fight against all efforts by the New Right to limit the options in our lives. We must reset the agenda to one for equality and justice.

For all who participated on October 22nd and 29th, the taste of victory is sweet. It is the beginning of many victories to come. We thank all who joined us on these days and look forward to growing in strength in the future.

> Ellen Convisser President, Boston National Organization forWomen

Marlene Fried Susan Yanow for Reproductive Rights Network, Boston

Judith Przybek Susan Worgaftik for the Alliance Against Women's Oppression, **Boston**

SPEAKING OUT

The Death and Birth of Families

By Jack Ben-Levi

Where has the United States gone with this election? At least four more years of criminal neglect on AIDS have been accepted; a terrible new ideology is forming; the new Supreme Court will solidify it. With the election of George Bush this country has apparently chosen an answer to the AIDS crisis consisting of the most reactionary social principles. Adding insult to injury, it is a response which makes a show of slapping all mariginalized groups in the face.

Some students at Oberlin College have realized that we, too, will not escape the effects of both AIDS and the government measures to deal with it. This has been the impetus behind the formation of ACT UP OBERLIN. Responses have been both extremely encouraging --- we have around 65 members, not counting a Cleveland contingent - and indicative of how very far we have yet to travel. Homophobic and AIDSphobic incidents are on the rise at Oberlin.

The practice of using AIDS as a weapon seems likely to intensify everywhere. As Simon Watney's essay "The Spectacle of AIDS" (in *October* 43) points out, the syndrome has been used to position IV drug users, prostitutes, people of color, gay men and lesbians within the penal colonies of "risk groups," obscuring their real human suffering under the weight of medicalized

The hidden agenda of mandatory testing is precisely to consign individuals to these categories, opening the possibility of "therapeutic cures" for these newly categorized "deviants." This positioning of 'deviancy' reassures the "general population" about the security of its own existence, about its right to the power it already has - a circular ideology that constantly increases the control of those who

The point here is that many people — including many college students undiscerning of the election's stakes — who assume that this ideology won't touch them will be its victims as well. One main focus of ACT UP OBERLIN is in educating the rest of the college community and communities further afield about the real issues and conflicts in

Just what are these conflicts? Beneath this first layer of ideology, Watney isolates a really frightening shift in root metaphors constituting society. (He uses gay men as somewhat of a representative example here.) To quote him:

"AIDS is increasingly being used to underwrite a widespread ambition to erase the distinction between 'the public' and 'the private,' and to establish in their place a monolithic and legally binding category · 'the family'.... The spectacle of AIDS thus promises a stainless world in which [gay men] will only be recalled.... as signs of plagues and contagions averted — intolerable interruptions of the familial...."

This newly reconceived society thus assumes a power over its citizens — all its citizens similar to that exercised by parents over unruly (or better, "disturbed") children, who "by definition" (whose definition?) are without sexual desire.

Examining, for instance, the desexualization of lesbian and gay culture, or the renewed infantilization of prostitutes as a result of AIDS, the implications of the theme Watney explores become clear. The Hardwick decision, which upheld Georgia's antisodomy statute, can be applied to deny all forms of sexuality outside of normative heterosexual marriage. Adults formerly endowed with the powerr of consent are now subject to "parental" — read preemptive — "punishments."

The case of two Maryland women (which Alexis Danzig of ACT UP New York has spoken of) jailed for sleeping together in a private trailer parked in a public camp site stands as a good example of this new ideology's possible results. Each, apparently, received a five-year jail sentence.

In the most healing place they could find

In a sunny corner of an island paradise far

A freak occurrence you say. Highly

Each torture-murder of a woman-couple

There was a reason I withdrew from my

And when the two men stalked us that day

On the only sunny day of our three-week

They sought refuge

The fantasy becomes reality.

After such a violent death?

Are we safe anywhere at all?

I say that each woman-killing,

A world that destroys love.

Is the consequence of a sick world,

In the islands of Quebec Province.

She was angry at me for retreating

But something in me felt unsafe.

The reality becomes nightmare.

Can there be peace for them or for us

What do we control in this world?

from home.

unusual.

I say no.

vacation,

Separated

There are few members of our society who will remain unaffected by these developments. Presumably strict puritan morals do not enjoy any great vogue in this country, even among members of the Republican Party. Individuals who ignore the effects of this new ideology do so at their peril; it is in everyone's ultimate interest to oppose a system that will oppress its enforcers as well as its victims.

To overcome this system, it seems, we ultimately have to organize ourselves as a "family," but a large, decentralized one, not one on this totalitarian model.

ACT UP - be it in Oberlin, in Cleveland, in San Francisco or New York - is one group opposing these prevailing currents. The election has been lost, yet this new reactionary ideology can still be curtailed. Don't let it assume full, frightening power. You, singular or plural, can have an impact. Join us. Together we will not be silent. We will be present at the Inauguration, at the Congress, the Supreme Court. We are not going

Jack Ben-Levi is a member of ACT UP New York and a student at Oberlin College, where he is helping to organize an ACT UP

The opinions expressed in Speaking Outs are those of the authors and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN member-

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Lesbians and gay men of color are particularly encouraged to apply.

A demon appeared

I am horrified, saddened and angered over the news of the brutal murders of Martha Alsup and Susan Galvin [the two women killed on the island of Anguilla on Nov. 29; see GCN Dec. 4-10]. Though I did not know either of these women personally, I found myself writing down my thoughts after reading of their deaths, if only to help myself cope with the un-copeable.

Today, a demon appeared On the front pages of the Globe Striking two unsuspecting lovers at once Lying alone on a warm beach Far from home.

The demon is a coward Who seeks out those who cannot defend against him. There are two of them And one of him, But he is prepared And they are not.

He has watched, and waited, With instruments of torture Poised for the moment they are most relaxed

(Asleep, perhaps?)

The women think they are in safe surroun-

(And why should they believe otherwise?) They have researched and planned carefully

Planned for peace, planned for seclusion, Safe haven, away from the demons They face daily as therapists, Facing AIDS, Facing homophobia, Facing illness and death in their own lives,

I knew I was right to trust my instincts. What must we do in the face of Womanhating?

On the secluded beach,

While we walked alone,

They in their jeep

From each other,

Where do we go? Can love survive?

Kowalski

her communication skills and to also assess the situation concerning her family and significant other relationship.

The statement also said that "with increased communication skills in a safe setting, [Kowalski] could reliably express her wishes concerning visitation.'

Sue Wilson, one of Thompson's attorneys, told GCN, "It's clear [from the report] that Sharon has said again that she still wants to see Karen. It's also clear that after three and a half years of being held prisoner [in the Hibbing, Minn. nursing home Donald Kowalski selected] she is depressed and feels like she has no control over her life. And it's clear that she needs to and is capable of deciding who she wants to

Wilson said she and Thompson would wait to see Campbell's written order before making their next legal move, but that a couple of options were possible. She said that the motion pending before the court is to have Kowalski "restored to capacity," which would declare her capable of making decisions for herself and eliminate her need for a guardian. "One of the things you can get from reading this report," said Wilson, "is that possibly Sharon does not need a guardian.... Our first choice is no guardian, but if [Campbell] says she needs a guardian, then we'll say 'not this one." Elaborating on the latter possibility, Wilson said she would file a motion to have Donald Kowalski removed as guardian based on his failure to act in Kowalski's best interests and provide her with rehabilitative care.

Thompson was also harshly critical of Kowalski's parents. Referring to reports that Donald Kowalski plans to appeal Campbell's order to place Kowalski in a rehabilitation facility, Thompson said, "it's unbelievable he would appeal his daughter's right to be rehabilitated. How anyone can think these people [Kowalski's parents] are trying to rehabilitate their daughter is beyond me. It's obvious that if it wasn't for me [challenging the Kowalskis] Sharon would have spent the rest of her life in a nursing home.'

Gary Pagliacetti, Thompson's courtappointed attorney, said he was pleased with the results of the evaluation but would not comment specifically about the report. He said "the people who need to know know what the report says." When asked whether he had any plans to move that Donald Kowalski be removed as guardian, he said "not at this time, but if something comes up, we'll consider it." Pagliacetti said whether Thompson would be allowed to participate in Kowalski's rehabilitation was "up to Sharon" and her rehabilitation specialists. "It's important that Sharon gets the help she is supposed to get. She'll tell us what happens next," he said.

Tacie Dejanikus, chair of the National Free Sharon Kowalski Committee, told GCN that she and other activists were "elated" with the results of Kowalski's evaluation. "We really feel like this development is opening the door to Sharon's future," she said. She said the nation-wide network of lesbians, disabled-rights activists and others who have worked to publicize Kowalski's situation would take a "wait and see" attitude about the case. "We're still going to be doing work by getting the word out about the book [written by Thompson about her experience struggling with Kowalski's parents and the legal system] and working with the press. Sharon has to be in a rehabilitation facility surrounded by the people she chooses and getting the treatment she needs to be able to test her limits and develop her strengths before we're going to close up shop," Dejanikus said.

Thompson acknowledged the work of the many activists involved in the struggle to "bring Sharon home." "I can't say what the support has meant all along. In going around the country talking to people, I've always known we've been making a difference, but for the first time I feel like we've made a difference for Sharon."

☐ filed from Boston

Candlelight

Continued from page 3

of violence that have received public attention in the last month in the Boston area. She referred to the recent discovery of a woman's body in New Bedford - believed to be one of at least six victims of a "serial killer"; the case of the Sudbury man charged with beating his three-month-old daughter to death; and another local case of a man accused of killing his six-year-old son.

Smith expressed concern with what she described as the media's overemphasis on the Caribbean during coverage of the murders and reminded ralliers that the slayings could have happened in their own homes.

Many who knew the couple, either as friends or through their work as psychotherapists, have also expressed anger at other aspects of the mainstream media's coverage of the event. Two women who did not wish to be named spoke with GCN and expressed anger that Alsup and Galvin's relationship as lovers has been included in news coverage and other public responses to the murders. One woman explained that some people have "tried to politicize this into a lesbian issue, and that isn't what this is about. It's about women." She continued saying, "They were lesbian women.... They were a couple but that was only a part of who they were. They just happened to be lovers as a part of their lives and they would want this [their murders] dealt with as an issue of violence in the world.'

Pratt spoke with GCN after the rally and said, "I don't have any problem with the way the media has highlighted and respect-



Candlelight rally participants

fully treated their lesbianism. The fact was that they were traveling alone as women because they were lovers. One of the reasons we as lesbians go off alone to remote beaches is to get away from heterosexual society and to look for a level of privacy denied us in our day-to-day lives.'

Pratt did express anger at the "murders in paradise" slant of some mainstream news reports, which she said portrayed the double slaying as an isolated incident of violence. She disputed that perception and recalled the murder of Rebecca Wight, a lesbian shot in May while camping with her lover on the Appalachian Trail. The man convicted of murdering Wight claimed she and her lover provoked him by having sex in front of him. (See GCN, Nov. 27, 1988). Pratt added that these recent acts of violence had affected the choices she and others are making about their lives; for instance, Pratt said she and her lover will now only travel with another couple or a gay man.

Smith, who participated in demonstrations and organizing efforts responding to the murders of 12 Black women and one white woman killed in Boston 10 years ago, told the ralliers, "It's always open season on women. It's always open season on children. It's always open season on Black people and other people of color. It's always open season on poor people. It's always open season on lesbians and gay men, and God help you if you're more than one of those things at the same time."

Sentinel

Continued from page 1

less "high-falutin'." In a recent editorial, the Sentinel pledged to make room for "Republican, lesbian and ethnic voices.

Cockrell said the staff members who walked out have, in fact, received widespread support from the community. She added that a group of ex-Sentinel staff is organizing to produce a paper of its own. Cockrell said the new paper will be "truly co-sexual, multicultural and progressive,' and that the staff is hoping to work as collective.

Tim Taylor told GCN he is considering filing a lawsuit against Chalker and the Sen-

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Morgan Gwenwald's May in "On Our Backs" calendar

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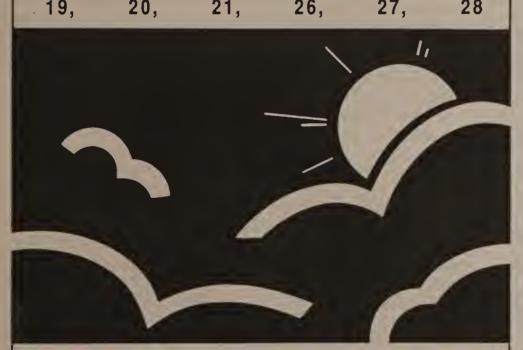
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I'll take my Ms. July in leather any day

'On Our Backs Lesbian Sex Calendar' and 'Working Girl's Datebook'

On Our Backs 1989 Lesbian Sex Calendar. Photos selected by Jill Posener, designed by Debi Sundahl. With photographs by Jill Posener, Honey Lee Cottrell, Morgan Gwenwald, J.A. Cherry and others. Published by **On Our Backs**. \$12.95.

Working Girl's Datebook 1989. Designed/Illustrated/Published by Nicole Ferentz,

By Elizabeth Pincus

atebook-dependent lesbians with a taste for the lewd can now rely on erotic calendars made by, for and about lesbians. Holy Sappho! Magazines, videos, double-headed dildos, datebooks ... what will the porn dykes think of next? Of course, plenty of T-and-A calendars are already on the market: just pop into your local auto parts store and check out Miss July. But why stomach that airbrushed, passively-posed, male-produced fluff when Ms. July can be a semi-clad leather dyke bodybuilder all flexed for action? Flipping the calender page has never held such pro-

Two 1989 examples of this new genre present distinctly different approaches — the whimsical and the raunchy. The latter, not surprisingly, comes from the women at On Our Backs. True to form, the On Our Backs 1989 Lesbian Sex Calendar is a glossy black and pink pin-up with arty photographs by some of the magazine's regular contributors. Designed by Debi Sundahl with a cover design by Susie Bright, this calendar offers a gamut of erotic images from a contemplative bathtub scene to a playful dominatrix-with-whip scenario. On Our Backs readers will recognize some faces and flanks in these pages, caught by the cameras of — among others — Honey Lee Cottrell, L.A. Hyder and Mariette Pathy Allen.

If the On Our Backs calendar were hanging on my wall, I'd want May to go on all year. By far my favorite photo in the collection, this shot by Morgan Gwenwald captures a stirring moment in the grass between an anachronistically-dressed butch/femme duo. Shown from the hips down, thighs grinding, the textures of leather, lace, nylon and polyester leap compellingly off the page. I also wouldn't mind lingering in steamy August, which serves up a butch-onbutch affair by photographer Dawn Lewis. October, however, I would skip on by — it's a Tee Corinne vulva-and-nature juxtaposition which just makes me squirm.

I could also do without the quotes from photographers which appear on most of the On Our Backs calendar pages. The images are fine, thanks; no need for these selfserious musings that read like excerpts of bad poetry. The exception is September, when a group of photographers listing themselves as Brill/Evans/Smith explain: "As members of the Natoma Street Porn Collective, we hold photo shoots on national holidays. Our mission is to appropriate public and business space, and infuse them with feminine sexuality." I like that. A little subversion in a calendar which

otherwise dutifully notes the patriarchal holidays. (Well, along with the seasonal equinoxes and the full moons....)

The other new erotic calendar I perused - Working Girl's Datebook 1989 by Nicole Ferentz — is the one penned with warm whimsy. This spiral-bound datebook in soft blues and reds offers cartoonishly simple drawings of dykes at play. Ferentz's illustrations, which debuted last year in the pages of Chicago Outlines, come off more friendly than titillating, but the overtly sexual images do get under your skin in a charming sort of way. Ferentz also throws in a few fold-outs and scattered wry captions, such as "Playmate of the year" and "Bound by memories." It's not breathtaking stuff, but



February in "Working Girl's"

it's kind of cozy.

I can't figure out the title, though — why the "Working Girl's" datebook? A double entendre about sex, or an embrace of all working women? Given the book's leisurely feel, it doesn't make sense either way. The calendar itself notes all the usual holidays, plus a few perks, i.e. International Women's Day (March 8) and Human Rights Day (December 10). Overall, the Working Girl's Datebook 1989 is awash with good intentions and technical crispness. Whereas the On Our Backs calendar presents erotic moods that vary with the changing seasons, Ferentz's datebook blurs the days together lovingly, much like melting vanilla ice cream.

Watch for more meatwomen and meatmen, plus other gay, peace and feminist calendars next week.

her sparkle caught my eye...

By Tatiana Schreiber

upita was wearing a bright pink shirt the day I met her, but what I noticed first was that she wore a pink triangle. And in her eyes, along with a certain revolutionary sparkle, I caught the unmistakable gaze of a lesbian saying "I recognize you and I'm one too."

Other North American lesbians who have visited Nicaragua had told me they felt they should be cautious about how out to be there, and under what circumstances, bearing in mind that one always needs to respect the way women in a particular culture want to express their identities. So I was kind of taken aback when the woman who was to be our co-tour guide for the week's visit greeted me and my friend with that conspiratorial grin, and within minutes was explaining (in the half-English, half-Spanish we all used for the rest of the trip) that she felt desnuda without her boton. She told us a story about how she responded when people asked her about the pink triangle. At first she would say that it was a symbol of the homosexual movement, and since she had friends who were gay, she wore it to support gay liberation. If the question was followed with, "Are you a lesbian?" she would answer vaguely, until one day she looked the person asking in the eye and said, "Yes, I'm a lesbian." And now, as for many of us, there's no turning back.

Not all the lesbians we met in Nicaragua wanted to be as out as Lupita. She has come out to her father, with whom she lives, and says he supports her choice completely. Her mother, on the other hand, was so homophobic that Lupita thought she'd rather die than know her daughter was gay. So Lupita never told her, even when her mother was sick and dying, because she didn't want to hurt her.

Now in her late twenties, Lupita joined the "Frente Sandinista" as a teenager and lived clandestinely until the triumph of the revolution in 1979. The first woman she remembers falling in love with was the young high school activist who recruited her to join student organizing efforts. Lupita told me what that was like — "I saw her in my high school.... I told her, 'I know why you're here,' and she looked at me straight in the eyes, slightly coyly, slightly maliciously, and she said 'Well, if you know why I'm here, why don't you join me?' and I said, 'Esta bien, OK!' and that's how the two of us began to organize our high school."

Perhaps the Nicaraguan revolution owes more to lesbianism than its leaders would like to acknowledge. But, if Lupita has her way, that will change. Her latest project is to write a book on gay history in Nicaragua, featuring interviews with famous, infamous, and little known gay Nicaraguans. The Sandinistas put a very high priority on "rescuing Nican culture and history," and Lupita is a very patriotic Sandinista.

For me it was remarkable to meet a Nicaraguan woman who fought and risked her life for this revolution (she often had to carry messages through lines of National Guardsmen, concealing the message in her hair or clothing or vagina - though other messengers were raped, miraculously she never was) and now is equally dedicated to fighting for gay and lesbian liberation. 1 want, I need this revolution to survive and to live for so many reasons, but largely because I want Lupita and the other lesbians and gay men I met to succeed in creating, perhaps for the first time in history, a revolution that fully incorporates gay people. Despite my inherent cycnicism (I went to Nicaragua to attend an international radio conference, not because I felt I needed to see the revolution for myself), I was immediately drawn into Lupita's passionate belief in what the Sandinista victory has made possible. She has faith that, while machismo and heterosexism are deeply ingrained in the culture, in their hearts most Nicaraguans can learn to accept, and perhaps one day even celebrate, the lesbians and gay men among them.

A small gay community exists in Nicaragua today, and its self-confidence is growing. The Ministry of Health (MINSA) fully supports a group of lesbian and gay health educators who are doing AIDS prevention education in the public parks where gay men meet. (So far there have been two AIDS-related deaths in Nicaragua and the government is engaged in a serious prevention campagin which stresses sexual behaviors, and does not blame gay people for the spread of AIDS.) A lesbian psycholgist I met, who consults for the government on this project, said she had

Lupita

faith that, while machismo and heterosexism are deeply ingrained in the culture, in their hearts most Nicaraguans can learn to accept, and perhaps one day even celebrate, the lesbians and gay men among them.



Lupita (L) and Tatiana

Poems by Lupita

This is for those of you who suffer in silence the internal repression of being gay or being lesbian.

Accepting oneself, as one is, requires a new and open vision of life;

We are not abnormal,
we have been victims of social
repression
and like all humanity
we have the right to live
with dignity in this world,
and we have the commitment
to help our brothers and sisters
rip apart the enslaving chains
that enclose our lives,
and to educate society.

When we accept ourselves we experience a rich, calm sensation of internal peace. Even the air that caresses our skin awakens our sensitivity.

Yes gay brother and lesbian sister leave the psychological yoke that today torments you and like us live physically and mentally healthy in this life.

translated from the Spanish by Roxanna Pastor

never experienced any hostility or tension in her interactions with government officials. On La Primerisima, the most widely listened -to community radio station in Managua, a progressive heterosexual woman hosts a lively sex education call-in show, and she is not afraid to talk about homosexuality on the program. She views it as a positive choice for many people, and though she has received criticism from the authorities (who are afraid young men won't want to join the army for fear of rampant homosexuality) she refuses to back away from her position.

Lupita probably goes farther than most lesbians in Nicaragua would dare. One day as we were driving along a busy Managua street — about seven of us cramped into the trusty Toyota as usual — Lupita spotted a Nortéamericana dyke cruising alongside us on her motorcycle. Lupita leans across three of us, sticks her head out the window and yells, "Hey, girl! Wanna go party?" And hey, what's a revolution without dancing? Lupita's got my "lavender left" button now, and I have her sparkling eyes always in my mind, encouraging me to keep working for my dreams.

Anyone interested in making donations to the AIDS Education Project in Nicaragua can make checks payable to Vanguard Foundation/Bill Kraus Fund (specify for Nicaraguan AIDS Education). Send to Nicaraguan AIDS Education Project, 3181 Mission St., #13, S.F., Calif. 94110. Also needed are lubricated latex condoms, office supplies and educational materials. The Bill Kraus Fund is named for a San Francisco gay man active in Central America solidarity work who died of AIDS in January of 1986.

Anyone interested in donating books (in Spanish or English) on lesbian/gay history to Lupita can drop them off or send them to Stephanie Poggi, c/o GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

Thanks to Roxanna Pastor for translation of the poems. Thanks to Amy Banks for translating an interview with Lupita while competently maneuvering the Toyota up a bouncing mountain road in pouring rain. Thanks to Vanessa Nemeth for her helpful c o m m e n t s.

Escribo ahora
a los que sufren
clandestinos, en silencio,
la represión interna
de ser homosexuales
o de ser Lesbianas.

El aceptar uno mismo que lo es, significa asumir una nueva visión y amplia de la vida; no somos anormales, hemos sido victimas de la represión social y como todo ser humano, tenemos derecho de vivir dignamente en este mundo, y también el compromiso de ayudar a otros hermanos y

hermanas a romper las cadenas esclavas de una vida de caverna interna, de educar a la sociedad.

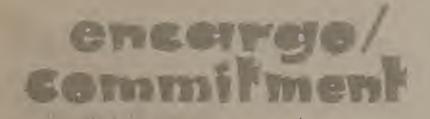
Pues cuando lo hacemos experimentamos una sensación rica, tranquila, de paz interna, llegamos a apreciar hasta el aire que acaricia nuestra rostro, despierta en nosotros una sensibilidad humana increíble.

Si hermano Homosexual, hermana Lesbiana:
Dejá ese yugo sicológico que hoy te atormenta y como nosotros, viví física y mentalmente saludable esta vida.

Nicaraguan Lesbians Saying It Out Loud

Sé que existo
y voy andando
sobre el tiempo
irreversible:
con una misión
que cumplir
junto a mis hermanos
Homosexuales,
Lesbianas y
tambien Revolucionarios:

Debemos educarnos a nosotros mismos y a nuestra sociedad en Revolución, que no somos anormales, enfermos, ne desviados ideológicos; que poseemos raciocinio, sensibilidad humana, gran ternura al amar, capacidad de lucha y combate contra nuestra enemigos, al lado de nuestros hermanos de clase social: "EL PROLETARIADO".



I walk through irreversible time and know I exist;

With a mission to fulfill along with my gay brothers and lesbian sisters, also revolutionaries:

to educate ourselves and our society in revolution;

Let's make it clear: we are not abnormal, sick, nor ideologically deviant.

We are rational,
with human sensibility,
tender in our love,
and capable of fighting against
our enemies
side by side with our brothers
and sisters:
THE PROLETARIAT

translated from the Spanish by Roxanna Pastor

Carta a una companera

By Gina Anderson

Dear Marta:

I thought of you last night as I sat a table full of Nicaraguan families; the men as usual barrigones, the women bemakeupped, bespectacled, bestockinged, beheeled, betrayed by their fathers, husbands, sons. The men strutting like peacocks, preening in the security of their masculinity. The inbred machismo of centuries reflected in their actions as they gathered in their customary groups around the bar to talk "man talk," and occasionally mosied back to the table to engage the little lady in a dance or two.

I remembered years ago in a Cantina called Macondo, how I almost cried with anger and jealousy because I wanted to dance with you the way JavierJoséChacalónManuel danced with you. I envied the surety of their hands as they twirled you and held on to your hips with careless abandon. I remember draining the bottle of Flor de Caña and recklessly opening another with trembling hands wanting to drown the pain, hunger, wanting that engulfed me, that made me want to strangle every JavierJoséChacalón-Manuel that crossed your path. Again, a plaintive cry rises from my chest. Am I alone? Can I be the only Nicaraguan cochona in New York City? Where are the others that have struggled to sever the bonds that tied us to the patriarchal umbilical cord that preached to us from the crib to be buenas niñas, faithful and obedient to our brothers, in training for our future husbands? We were taught costura and knitting from the first grade to prepare for our future babies. We were taught to pound out our clothes and our brother's by hand in the lavandero while our brothers played baseball and football carelessly in the streets, to pound out tortillas, mix up pinolillo and cebada and to cook up huge ollas of mondogo for our men, God forbid they go hungry.

I thought of Rossana, my childhood friend, who was my partner in crime in many of my firsts such as smoking cigarettes, and with whom I shared a first kiss on the lips. We had our first period together and suffered through the indignities of having no kotex throughout the earthquake in '72. She could ride a horse bareback and throw a baseball faster and more accurate than I could. Together we kicked in many goals on our ragtag football team and disdained the Solorzano sisters because they were too "aylere." Rosanna taught me to ride a horse and together we rounded up cattle along with the ranch hands on her father's farm in Tipitapa. Where is she today? Did she also grow up to be a cochona or is she a compañero's submissive wife? Where are the other tomboys that I grew up with? Could I be the only one who suffered through the pain of realizing that I was different, that I did not care for the strong arms of some hincho to embrace me although I suffered through many, trying to prove that I was equal to my other sisters in Nicaragua.

Mi querida Marta, do you remember the longing looks that we gave each other as we passed through the corridors of Casa Palazio? The way we sneaked looks at each other as we discoed with our respective partners at the "Lobo Jack" and "Frisco Disco"? Do you remember asking me in my office one hot summer day if I got drunk enough, would I be capable of sleeping with a woman, then lowering your eyelids in acute embarrassment as I in a moment of rare honesty boldly told you that if it were you I would.

Marta, it took me seven years of getting drunk and one of sobriety to finally be able

to say out loud and clear, "Yes, I am a Cochona, a Maricona, a Nicaraguan dyke." Eight years of self deceit and pretension. I even tried a marriage, a conventional lifestyle, in order to try to fit in, to belong. I lived the "American dream," a handsome young and able husband, U.S. and foreign owned cars, suburban house with the big yard and all the booze and drugs I could get in my system. I tried to be a modern day Rafaela Herrera,** and hold back the fort on my feelings, on the real me that society would ostensibly reject. The compañeros don't want a compañera that would threaten their machismo, ego and last but not least, their women.

Years ago, when I last phoned you, my courage buoyed by a bottle of vodka, and told you that I was a lesbian, you in shock lectured me on how my sexuality was a crime against nature and reminded me that God created woman to lay with man and procreate.

I reminded you about that night seven years ago when you ran into my arms and we held each other tightly. Yes Marta, I kissed you and you responded passionately. Then we had to stop because of the pounding on the door. We never spoke about that incident. When I reminded you of this you angrily retorted that we were drunk and didn't know what we were doing. Your words still ring in my ears. Were you in angry denial of yourself, angry at me for bringing it up, or honestly believed the bullshit you were laying on me? In any case, you were right, we were drunk but I certainly knew what I was doing. At that moment I was confirming my sexuality. It was the awakening of the budding dyke that was always afraid to show myself to the world, in fear of being rejected for being unnatural, a freak. Although it's taken several years since then to grow to accept me for what I am, a black, Nicaraguan lesbian, today I love myself. But I would like to know, are there any more out there? Am I the only

Tu compañera,

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June 2, 1985

* feminine

** an eighteenth century Nicaraguan heroine

This piece is reprinted from Compañeras: Latina Lesbians, an anthology compiled and edited by Juanita Ramos. (See review in GCN, Oct. 23, 1988.) In Compañeras, Gina Anderson describes herself as "a Nicaraguan woman born in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua and raised in Nicaragua and the United States. I am working as a train conductor after many years of working as a secretary. I love women, softball, nature and cats." To get a copy/copies of Compañeras, send \$8.95 per book plus 15 percent shipping costs to Latina Women's Educational Resources, P.O. Box 627 Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009.







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Santa Cruz

Continued from page 3

group's services and explaining basic facts about acquaintance rape and assault.

The judge also threw out the definition of malice SCWAR thought they had been charged with: a state of mind caused by hatred or ill will toward the plaintiff. "At first, we thought we would win the case because clearly we did not feel any hatred or ill will toward Carney," said Shirchild. "We believed in good faith that what we had printed in the description list was the truth. In fact, Carney admitted in court that he had basically done what we said he had done—although he said it was consensual.

"In court, we were never allowed to talk about our experience working with women who had been assaulted," Shirchild said. "We were not allowed to tell the jurors that only five percent of acquaintance assaults are reported to the police. We were not allowed to educate about rape in any way. We were not allowed to put our expert witness on the stand to show that how Winkler was reacting was totally consistent with Rape Trauma Syndrome."

Staniforth's refusal to hear testimony from two key SCWAR witnesses — the director of the Santa Cruz Victim Witness Program and a psychologist who specializes in treating Rape Trauma Syndrome — deprived the group of the core of its case, according to SCWAR attorney Leslie Levy.

"This case can set national precedent against women's right to share information about dangerous men," said Shirchild. "One consequence we fear is that it will have a chilling effect on what we can talk about. It says to women that you cannot talk about the very real violence in your lives."

Despite the strain caused by the case, which took four years to come to trial, and the debt incurred for its legal defense, SCWAR members say they have remained committed to offering services to women who have been assaulted or raped. If its motion for a new trial is denied, SCWAR plans to appeal the decision. "We've been told by several attorneys that we have an excellent chance, especially on the issue of the judge throwing out our definition as a media defendant," said Shirchild. The process is an expensive one, however; the cost of the

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trial transcripts alone is \$5,000.

SCWAR hasn't printed a description list since 1984, but its members say they believe such lists are valid ways for women in a community to share information that helps them protect themselves. "We found out years ago that the stereotype of a dangerous man as a crazy stranger who lurks in the bushes, or defining rapists as men of color, was not useful. The reality is that most women are assaulted by someone of the same race and by someone they know. We heard back from women in the community that realistic descriptions of violent men were very useful," said Shirchild. "Nothing in Carney's testimony caused us to change our minds.'

Note: Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to: SCWAR, Legal Defense Fund, P.O. Box 711, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

Almond/Pet Shop

Continued from back page

Soft Cell would have done it better. "The Stars We Are" is a vague song about the "old days," with lyrics like "A floor was a bed/And a bed held the mysteries of life...Ignorance was bliss/When adulthood we can resist...." It reads crummier than it sounds, but Almond used to be capable of so much more.

"Your Kisses Burn" is more of a curiosity than a success, due to the fact that it is a duet recorded with the recently-deceased Nico. Her vocals are an acquired taste I never acquired — much, much deeper than Almond's and therefore virtually genderbending.

"The Very Last Pearl" is the only other song of note, the sort of thing that would have turned on the B-side of a Soft Cell single (and they had great B-sides!).

Perhaps in time Almond will find a way to reclaim the Soft Cell momentum, almost ten years after he abandoned the group. Maybe it's a matter of reteaming with David Ball (which doesn't seem likely) or finding better collaborators than those he worked with on this album. He needs to find creative ways to end his songs, as almost everything on this album fades out — unlike the Soft Cell dancemix record Non-Stop Ecstatic Danc-

ing, where the group broke ground in the original segue department. Almond also needs to embrace good old fashioned pop music funnelled through a thoroughly modern sensibility. If he's careful, he could provide the soundtrack for the '90s — the decade where people stop pretending to be uninterested in sex and admit to wanting to have lots of it. If not, he'll remain a pop music footnote from a heady, exhilarating time.

The Pet Shop Boys' third album, Introspective is a different story entirely. What we have here is easily the mainstream album of the year. Pet Shop Boys are actually the late-'80s equivalent of Soft Cell, a synth-pop duo from England with a penchant for dance beats and homoeroticainfused lyrics. I don't think they have ever done a song with a gender reference (the subject of love songs is always "you") which is a far cry from Michael Callen's or the Communard's explicit love songs to men. But this calculated move on the part of lead singer/lyricist/brains-of-the-outfit Neil Tennant hasn't prevented everyone from knowing that these boys are gay and everyone, radio programmers, MTV and the record-buying public, from embracing their music. At times they seem calculated and detached with no other reason to exist than to implore us to dance. In other words this is the perfect group for the late-'80s!

The opening strains of "Left to My Own Devices" puts this album directly in the company of two of the most seminal dance albums of this decade, ABC's The Lexicon of Love and Frankie Goes to Hollywood's Welcome to the Pleasuredome. Of course, the producer of those albums, Trevor Horn, also produced this song with his same heavy orchestration and dance rhythms. But this tune doesn't sound as if it was taken from those works, rather it seems descended from them. And that's the key to the musical success of the album (recorded with different producers). Unlike most contemporary pop, you get the feeling that Introspective could not have been made at any time before 1988, so shimmery and contemporary is its sound. And it is in this opening song that Tennant expresses the origins of the Pet Shop Boys, "I was faced with a choice at a difficult age, Would I write a book or take to the stage? In the back of my head I heard distant feet,

Che Guevara and Debussy to a disco beat....' Why, Miss Thing! Is this a gay boy or what???

Next up is "I Want a Dog," the weakest song on the album and better than 98 percent of the dance music being released today. "Domino Dancing," the first hit from the album, rounds out side one and includes another key to understanding Pet Shop Boy's platinum success. The only way to describe "Domino Dancing" is "calypsotinged," not at all unlike Madonna's "La Isla Bonita." It couldn't be called "calypso" because these white English boys could never really do anything but appropriate the essence of certain sounds. They have smarts and talent but they would never pretend to have soul. Not at all unlike Madonna!

"I'm Not Scared" is the midtempo side two opener which segues neatly into an amazing remix of the Boys' big hit from last summer, a dance remake of "Always On My Mind." Even if you have this song in any of its 12 inch incarnations, the nineminute and five-second version included here is a sublime enough reason to purchase the album!

The six-song, over 50 minutes worth of music *Introspective* closes with "It's Alright," another Trevor Horn produced masterpiece. In this number Tennant focuses outside with some simplistic political references: "South Africa taking a stand — people in Eurasia on the brink of oppression." The somewhat shallow and completely catchy tone is the perfect pop for the end of this peculiar decade.

When Pet Shop Boys (Tennant and a guy named Chris Lowe, no one is exactly sure what his role is in this "band," which doesn't do live shows) refused to participate in an AIDS benefit, openly-gay Jimmy Somerville called the duo "closeted cowards" in the British press. Since that time the group has appeared at anti-Clause 28 benefits and shown up at AIDS galas. Their video for "Domino Dancing" looks like a glamorous travel video as produced by North American Man/Boy Love Association, while the "Always On My Mind" clip positively drips with homosexual desire. The Pet Shop Boys are the clever producers of the catchiest, most irresistible dance album of 1988, and queer as a three dollar bill.



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Continued from page 1

"I think you'll be surprised when you see the show," said Harbin. She also asserted that "the most powerful concession of all" had already been made by producers of the show who changed the script. In the original script, she said, the pregnant woman murders Barnes.

The script changes came about after AIDS activists in San Francisco, where the episode was filmed, interrupted shooting of the show. However, the groups which were allowed to suggest script revisions after the protests - ACT UP/San Francisco, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and Mobilization Against AIDS - were still dissatisfied after they were shown a screening of the pro-

The demonstration in Boston was one of many across the country in which local stations were assailed for airing the episode. MASS ACT OUT activist David Hamburger said that WBZ originally denied having the authority to cancel the episode, which was produced for NBC. WBZ not only made the decision to air the show, he said, but WBZ refused to pre-screen it for local groups. Hamburger also said that WBZ refused to run any disclaimer that might encourage viewers to seek accurate information by calling a hotline. Shouted one protester, "They won't adverstise condoms, but they'll show something like this."

Dave Candeias of MASS ACT OUT commented that "the whole show was pretty sex-negative. The radio host says at one point, 'It's not so bad to sleep in a bed by yourself. You always have yourself to keep yourself warm.' He was saying that it's okay to give up on a sex life, ignoring the crucial subject of safer sex."

Liz Highleyman, a member of BiCEP who attended the demo, said of the program, "We were disturbed that bisexuals are never portrayed on TV. This first portrayal was very negative. This character was basically a psychopathic sort who was unreliable, and we believe he perpetuates a lot of the stereotypes that people have about bisexuals — that they are unconcerned about safe sex and are out to screw whoever they can."

"[Viewers] do hate Mike Barnes," said Harbin, "but not because he has AIDS or because of his sexual orientation." When asked why the Barnes character was created as bisexual in the first place, Harbin said she did not know. Responding to a question about whether WBZ had ever done any public service announcements to discourage anti-gay violence, Harbin spoke instead of WBZ's devotion to spreading awareness about AIDS. She added that things were getting better at NBC in terms of avoiding "a gay character who's an interior decorator, or who lisps."

Highleyman said she was encouraged that BiCEP was able to participate in the demonstration, adding that she and other members of the group "hope in the future that bisexuals will be considered as an integral part of the effort to combat homophobia, bi-phobia and AIDS-

Note: In anticipation of possible anti-gay incidents that the show may incite, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force urges people to report any anti-gay or AIDSphobic harassment or violence by calling (202) 332-6483. Said Kevin Berrill, NGLTF Anti-Violence Project director, "If even one incident of harassment or violence occurs as a result of this program, we fully intend to hold NBC and Lorimar [the producer] accountable."

Letters or phone calls of protest can be directed to: WBZ TV, c/o Francine Achbar, Program manager, 1170 Soldiers Field Rd., Boston, MA 02134, (617) 787-7087; NBC TV, c/o Brian Pike, Vice-president of drama programming, Rm. 228 Administration, 300 W. Alameda Ave., Burbank, CA 91523, (818) 840-4892; Lorimar Studios, c/o Robert Singer, Executive producer, 10202 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, (213) 280-8000.

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Safer Sex and Drug Use **Guidelines**

Assessing individual risk for AIDS and other illnesses is the first step towards using safer sex and drug use guidelines. Only you and your partner(s) can decide how much risk is acceptable — take stock of your sexual and drug use histories.

Be aware that the highest concentrations of HIV (the virus widely thought to cause AIDS) are found in blood and semen. The most common routes of HIV transmission are through sharing needles and unprotected anal or vaginal intercourse.

GCN's guidelines come from a wide variety of sources aimed at various communities concerned about the AIDS epidemic and health in general. We want to confront the prevailing "no sex is best" attitude and present an approach that is as sex-positive as

Information for gay male, lesbian and bisexual communities

Safer sex can include: massage, hugging, kissing, erotic talk, phone sex, masturbation (solo, pairs and groups), using your own vibrators, dildos or other sex toys and s/m, butch/fem role-playing, fantasy scenes, bondage and other activities that do not involve the exchange of semen or blood (including menstrual blood).

Do not allow a partner's semen or blood (including menstrual blood and blood drawn from piercing, cutting or shaving) to enter your vagina, anus, mouth or breaks in your

Use condoms for fucking (anal and vaginal intercourse), for licking/sucking penises and for covering dildos and other sex toys. Use water-based lubricants. Use latex barriers (dental dams or other plastic/latex materials) between the genital area and mouth when licking/sucking cunts and assholes. Be especially careful to avoid the exchange of menstrual blood. Using nonoxynol-9 or other spermicides with condoms and latex barriers may add extra protection.

For finger-fucking or fisting (anal or vaginal

penetration with fingers or hands), use latex gloves or finger cots. Use water-based lubricants.

Alternative insemination may put you at risk. Be sure to discuss risk for AIDS with potential donors or sperm bank.

Be aware that some risk of exposure to immune-suppressing infections (such as mono and amoebiasis) may be associated with rimming (anal-oral contact) — use a latex barrier. Risk may also be associated with watersports (urine) or feces in the mouth, rectum or in open cuts. If you share dildos, vibrators or other sex toys, use condoms or clean toys with hydrogen peroxide.

Your body's ability to fight all disease, including AIDS and its related illnesses (such as Kaposi's Sarcoma and pneumocystis carinii pneumonia), may be benefitted by general good health good nutrition lots of resi exercise and nonabuse of alcohol, poppers and other drugs.

If you use IV drugs, follow the guidelines below.

Intravenous drug use

Do not share works (needles, syringes, droppers, spoons, cottons or cookers).

Do not re-use needles; use fresh cottons each time.

If you must share or re-use your works, clean them as follows: dip needle and works into 100 percent bleach, draw up and release three times, dip needle and works into water, draw up and release three times (in an emergency, rubbing alcohol, vodka or wine can also be used). As an alternative, boil works in water for at least fifteen minutes. Use a fresh solution each time you clean your

Resource phone numbers

National AIDS Hotline 1 (800) 342-7514 AIDS Action Committee (AAC) Boston (617) 536-7733 Latino AIDS Hodine (bilingual), Boston: (617) 262 7248 AIDS Action Committee (AAC) IV Drug Use Taskforce, Boston: (617) 437-4200

Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), New York (212) 807-6655

National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), Washington, D.C. (202) 544-1076 Women's AIDS Network, San Francisco (415) 864-4376

PERSONALS

GCN REPLY BOXES

Replies to GCN Boxes should be addressed to GCN Box #, Gay Community News, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116. This applies to GCN Boxes only, not to P.O. Boxes. Mail may be addresses to GCN Boxes for four weeks after the issue in which it appears

GODDESS LOVERS ONLY

Lesbian and pagan seeks similar to share search for some alternative ways of living in patriarchal society. I am sensuous, 40, attractive, non-smoking. Box 457, 105 Charles Street, Boston, MA 02114. (24)

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GWM 52, chunky, smooth, good looking, easy going, seeks younger Greek active companion to share home and bed. No drugs. GCN Box 500. Tim and Sherman, Thank you both for typing for me. 1 wouldn't have made it this week and many pages of GCN would've looked like the Nothing Book. C. (23)

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ORIENTAL BARS

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News Reporter/Circulation Coordinator: Research, investigate and write weekly news stories, primarily about national issues, and, as necessary, stories about Boston/New England. Share responsibility for coordinating weekly mailings of GCN to all subscribers and maintaining computerized subscription list. Qualifications: Strong writing ability, ability to work with deadlines, knowledge of lesbian and gay issues, ability to work well with volunteers, knowledge of computers, attention to detail. Deadline for application: January 27.

Promotions/Classified Advertising: Use direct mail marketing, exchange advertising, free distribution, renewal campaigns and other strategies to increase paid circulation of GCN. Log and process weekly classified advertising. Qualifications: Strong writing, administrative, creative and organizational skills. Experience in marketing, design or public relations a plus. Deadline for application: January

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To apply, please send resume, cover letter and writing samples to GCN Job Search Committee, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

Lesbians and gay men of color are particularly encouraged to apply.

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PUBLICATIONS

Quarterly edition on shoestring travel. This edition features Paris, Amsterdam, walking tour of Rome. \$3. P.O. Box 11975, Philadelphia, PA 19145. (23)

OFF OUR BACKS

Lively, down-to-earth feminism in the nation's oldest women's newsjournal. Analysis, reviews, conference coverage, and news - on health, feminist theory, reproductive rights, civil rights, and political work among working, disabled, incarcerated, old, and poor women, women of color, lesbians, and women from every continent. \$15/11 issues. Trial sub: \$4/3 issues. oob, Dept. GCN, 2423, 18th St., NW, Washington, DC

WOMEN'S REVIEW OF BOOKS

monthly review of current feminist writing. Since 1983. Our readers span the U.S., Canada, and abroad. Subscriptions: \$15/U.S., \$18/Canada, \$25/institutions. sample issue on request. THE WOMEN'S IEW, Wellesley Women's Research Center, Wellesley, MA 02181.

BLACKIOUT

Special 10th Anniv. edition of Black/Out now available. This bi/annual magazine from the National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays contains essays, reviews, poetry, news and announcements concerning the Black Lesbian and Gay community. Sample copy \$6 plus \$1 postage. 1 year subscription (2 issues) \$10 to Black/Out c/o NCBLG, 19641 West Seven Mile, Detroit, M1

LESBIAN CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. Quarterly of commentary, analysis, reviews, cartoons & humor by and for women who agree to disagree-who are still political, but not necessarily correct. Sample \$1.50; sub \$6; more if/less if. LesCon, 584 Castro, #263G, SF, CA 94114

GUARDIAN: Independent radical newsweekly. Covers Gay, women and minority struggles and international progressive movements. Special offer-4 issues FREE. Write Guardian, Dept GCN, 33W 17th St. NY, NY, 10011.

off our backs

Celebrating 15 years of radical feminist journalism. We bring feminist national/international news analysis and reviews each month. \$11 year, 11 issues. (\$15 for contributing subs) \$20 institutional fee, Sample-\$3 for 3 issues! Write 'off our backs' Dept GCN, 1841 Columbia Rd. NW, Room 212 Washington, DC 20009. (ex)

OUTRAGEOUS WOMEN

A journal of woman-to-woman s/m. Fantasy, analysis, erotic art and much more. Sub: \$13/four issues. Single issues \$4. Must state you are over 18. SASE for info. PO Box 23, Somerville MA 02143

WOMAN OF POWER: "A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics," an inspiring international quarterly publication. Subscriptions \$22 for 4 issues; singles issues \$6 plus \$1 postage, P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238, telephone (617) 625-7885. (ex)

PUBLICATIONS

lesbians, is 48 pages of erotic fiction, features, plus timely sexual advice and news colums. We are quarterly, national, unique and provacative. \$15/yr sub or \$5 current issue to: On Our Backs, PO Box 421916, San Francisco

ORGANIZATIONS

Social and support group for women over 40. P.O. Box 1214, East Arlington, MA 02174.

BLACK AND WHITE MEN TOGETHER Multiracial group for all people. Call (415) 431-1976 or write BWMT, suite 140, 584 Castro St. SF, CA, 94114.

BOSTON ALLIANCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH Social support group for youth 22 and under. Wed. night general meeting from 7:30-9pm. New persons meeting at 6:00. Women's meeting at 6:45. 523-7363 for info.

MAN/BOY LOVE

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Prisoners

WHO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR BONDAGE. Alexander Berkman Prison Memoirs of an Anarchiv



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month. GCN will be doing many articles, letters, poems, drawings and more, to celebrate the experience of ALL Black gay and lesbian people.

If you want to help us out by writing or drawing something, please do. Be sure to send your thing BEFORE January 15, so it can be on time. (Don't be shy now!)

Speakin of the 'Holidays':

Some of us here (Mike, for example) are 'solid' atheists; some are Jews; some have other ideas and beliefs. It's a drag, kind of, to have people who want to Thank us for 'Being there', always talk to us as if we were all 'Christians'. We're just 'folks', ok!

Speakin' for me (Mike), I'd LOTS rather get a note-

poem-drawing or whatever made by YOU, than some boughten Jesus-Santa thing. You all are much more interesting than they are, and I'm a hell of a lot more concerned with your words and images than with theirs. Really!

For those of you with a 'spiritual' side, you can get a free copy of a prisoner meditation and other support book called WE'RE ALL DOING TIME, by writing Prison Ashram Project, Rt 1. Box 201-N, Durham NC 27705.

Prisoners can get the JAILHOUSE LAWYERS MANUAL by sending \$8 to: Columbia Human Rights Law Review, Box 54, 435 W. 116th St., New York, NY 10027.

An excellent source of lawbooks (not free) is Gould Publications, 199/300 State St., Binghamton, NY 13901. Ask for a catalog.

Gay Prisoners & Protective Custody
Write GCN Prisoner Project, 62 Berkeley,
Boston MA 02116, for a copy of the legal issues
& cases on getting into PC (if you want), and on
getting out of PC (or Ad Seg or whatever
they're calling it where you are).



Looking for a QUEEN OF COLOR

I believe in emotional relationships 100 percent and am still seeking that special someone. I'm verrrry well-endowed and have no hang-ups except a maddening desire to fall in love with a Queen (TV) of color. James R. WILKINSON, C-064567 (1098), 3950 Tiger Bay Rd, Daytona Beach FL 32014.

28 yr old gay male, light brown complexion and eyes, black hair. I'm sensitive to ones feelings as well as my own. I'm very open minded. My hobbies are reading, writing, basketball, loving and most of all taking a walk in the country. Richard COLEMAN, 110833, Shark 3/L, Angola LA 70712.

24 yr old male looking to correspond with and receive photographs from others. I'm into country music, reading, and watching TV. Michael David THOMPSON, 01025-043, PMB 1000 F-east, Tallahassee FL 32301.



Green-eyed Brunette Aries willing to correspond with anyone. I'm a Nevada prisoner. Love adventures! Try me. Teresa WALKER, Box 7007, 26530, Carson City NV 89702.

My bunkie shares her paper with me and I think it is great. Would you please put my ad in the penpal column. I'm a 22 yr old Gemini looking for a few real people to correspond with. I have a variety of interests, and race and sex is not important. Michelle GIELLO, 152168 (158), PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.



OFF OUR BACKS, a women's liberation journal of news and features is free to women in prison. Write them at: OOB, 2423 18th St NW, Washington DC 20009



I'll be getting out next April, and am looking for some help finding work and a place to stay until I'm on my feet. I'm not into free-loading or playing headgames. I'd like to become involved in helping PWAs, though I'm negative myself. I have a little bit of money saved so I'm not completely busted. I can relocate because I won't be on parole — just FREE! If you're interested in writing, please do. You won't regret it. Jery RAGLAND, 17324-009, Box 1010, Bastrop TX 78602.

Gay man, 30, looking for that someone special. Enjoy outdoors, all music, writing, long walks and quiet evenings by the fire. Send photo if you can, and stamp. Lloyd CHANDLER, U—10, 47205, Parchman MS 38738.

Handsome black man in prison unjustly. Would like to 'meet' someone who appreciates a big cock. My interests are music, writing letters, travel, and just about all indoor/outdoor activities. Michael DAVIS, P-6968, RD 10 Box 10, Greensburg PA 15601.

Gay Black man looking for same that is well hung and big butted for a one on one relation-ship. Am a TS. I would like a man that can make up his mind. Am looking for Love. Michael HOWARD, 188-929, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699.

One Gay experience ...
28 yr old male need to meet some one that is 28 yr old male need to meet some one that is nice and understanding. I am in prison at the present time. But will write who ever decide to write. I had one Gay experience wish turn out bad. I love sports, music, reading and just having a nice time with my lover. Leonardo JACKSON, 179-211, Box 57, Marion OH

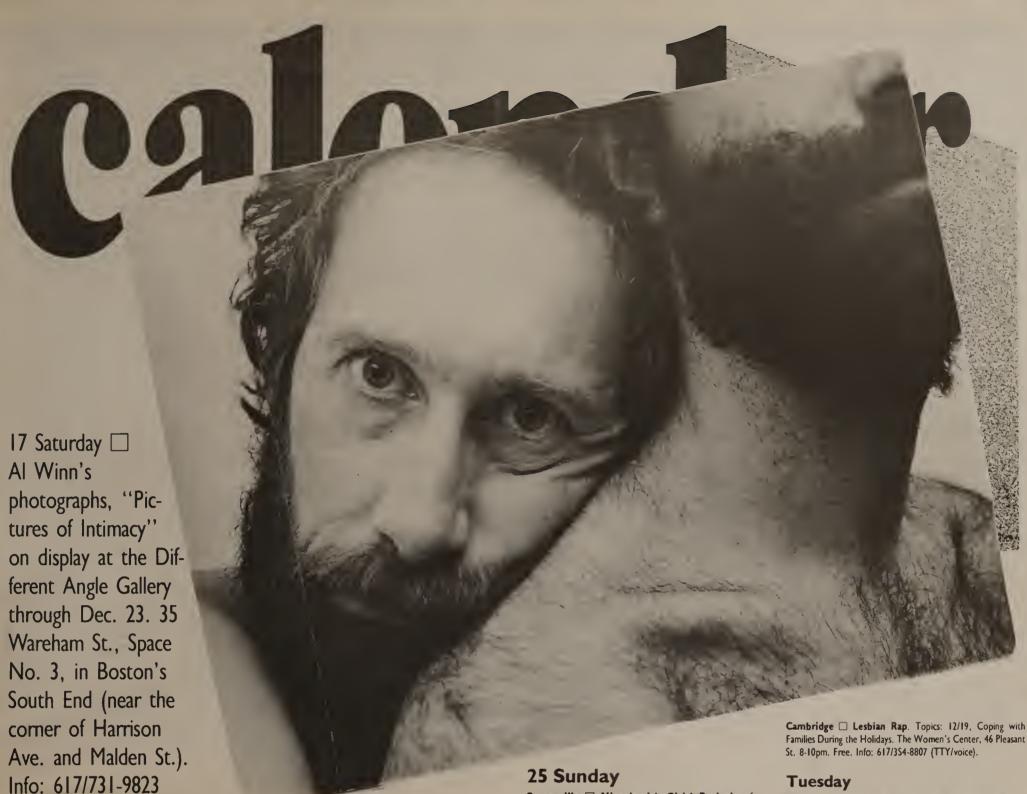
Denied NAMBLA & intergenerational sex reading
This is a plea to all my brothers & sisters who
are free (or who have some legal knowledge). I
need help to secure what I thought the US Constitution gave me: Freedom of speech and
freedom of the press. I'm not allowed to receive any items dealing with our sexual orientation or intergenerational relationships (NAMBLA). Please, if you care, contact me. Mark D. BEHRING, 38708, Box 2800, Lincoln NE

Very Lovely Gay Black Male who loves to receive as well as give wants to hear from so-meone on the outside who would be willing to give me a second chance to be loved again and to give love, Please no games. I want to build a relationship. Curtis STENNIS, 31212 (5-A-1), 1012 W Columbia, Farmington MO 63640

BGM, hobbies: art, cooking, sports, learning new trades and of course safe sex. Please write. Julian MACKEY, 15674, 3405 Deer Park Dr SE, Salem OR 97310

Attention MERLE STEPHENSON: David went to Reidsville. He loves you. You're still my best friend in the whole world. Love, Maggie. (I made parole and will be in touch when I get out)





Please note: Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos with listings are encouraged. Please specify if your event is or is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted

17 Saturday

Boston Christmas party with Prime Timers a group for older gay men. Downstairs at the Claddagh Restaurant, 335 Columbus Ave. 1-4pm. \$10 (buffet lunch). Info: Box 352, Reading MA 01867.

Jamaica Plain
Unique Physique sponsors an Aerobathon to benefit two battered women's shelters. 45 Danforth 5t. 9am-5pm. Info/pledges: 617/522-7545.

Cambridge Writing Workshop for women. Cambridge Friends Meetinghouse, 5 Longfellow Park. 10-6. Info: 5tacie 617/491-3789, Jaffray 536-6045.

Boston

Pictures of Intimacy, photographs by Al Winn at Different Angle Gallery, 33 Wareham 5t., 5pace No. 3, 12-6pm. Thru. 12/23. 12-6pm weekends, 5-8pm weekdays. Info: 617/731-9823.

Bolton Seven Sisters Lesbian Alumnae holiday party. 6-9pm. \$5. Info: 508/484-8527.

Jamaica Plain
Live band "Nantucket 5ounds" at SEGAL Country Dance Series. First Church (Unitarian/Universalist). Centre and Eliot 5ts. 8-11pm. \$5.

Cambridge Women's Craft Market Downstairs at 186 Hampshire 5t. 11-5pm. Info: 617/484-8527.

Boston Body Electric group sensual massage healing with Mykolas Hazen. 551 Tremont. 7:30pm. \$12. Info:

18 Sunday

Cambridge Memorial service for Susan Galvin and Martha Alsup. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 5:30-7pm. Also, meditation and chanting will take place from 4-4:30pm and music and song from 4:45-5:30pm. Info: Joan, 617/738-0785 (eves.) or 617/735-3368 (days).

Jamaica Plain

Lesbian and Gay Neighbors' holiday concert with the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trail Band. First Church, Unitarian Universalist, Eliot and Centre 5ts. 6pm. Free. Info: Kris, 617/364-7367.

Lowell

Gay in the Merrimack Valley potluck. FirstGrace Fellowsh p Hall, 79 Florence Ave. 6-10pm.

Boston □ Reading of Theresa Rebeck's **Spike Heels**. New Ehrlich Theatre, 539 Tremont. 7pm. \$3. Info 617/482-6316.

Northampton Lesbian Video Party 2pm-midnight. Info: 413/584-7616.

Brookline

Brookline/Brighton/Allston Lesbian Potluck (yum!) 6pm. Info: 617/566-2875.

Watertown

GLOW potluck. (also yum.) 7pm. Info: Chell or Amy 617/489-2519.

Boston Lesbian Nurses potluck (yum x3). 6pm. Info: Elizabeth 617/623-8278.

Cambridge ☐ Women's Craft Market 5ee 12/17.

19 Monday

Boston

Black History Month GCN coverage planning group meets to discuss special February issues. All Black lesbians and gay men welcome. 62 Berkeley 5t., near Arlington and Back Bay T stops. 7pm. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

Cambridge Volunteer night with the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. 7:30pm. Info: 617/247-6683.

20 Tuesday

Brookline Discussion for people who have a loved one with AIDS. lewish Family & Children's Service, 637 Washington 5t. 7:30pm. Info: 617/566-5716.

Worcester ☐ Light a Life — AIDS Project Benefit Club West, 26 Bolton St. (Rtes. 20 & 85). 8pm-2am. \$5. Info: Dana, 508/755-3773.

21 Wednesday

Boston ☐ NOW's Lesbian Rights Task Force at 971 Comm. Ave. 7pm. Info: 617/782-1056.

22 Thursday

Boston GCN's production night. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

23 Friday

Boston
GCN mailing. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. 62 Berkeley 5t., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

24 Saturday

Boston
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service MCC Boston, Old West Church, 131 Cambridge St. 7pm. Info: 617 523-7664.

Somerville Nice Jewish Girls' Potluck refuge from Christmas. (Jewish lesbians). 12-4pm. Info: Lisa, 617/666-2159.

Boston

Christmas Celebration Service MCC. 7pm. See above.

Against 5exism, 1270 Club, 1270 Boylston. Leave the consumer holidays behind. 9pm-2am. \$2, \$1 before 10pm.

27 Wednesday

Sanford, Maine

Gays and Lesbians United potluck. Unitarian/Universalist Church, Lebanon (Rt. 202) and Main (Rt. 109) Sts. Info: 207/439-5540 or 490-1295.

30 Friday

Maine

5nowshoeing at Baxter State Park with Chiltern Mountain Club. Winter mt. experience required. Info: Roy, 617/661-1436.

Weekly Events

Saturday

Boston Living With AIDS Theatre Project workshop. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

Boston Women's Self-Defense Collective Women's Self-Defense Classes. All ages and abilities. Meets Wed. eves., Sat. afternoons in South End. Info: 617/S74-9433.

Boston

Gay Boston, with Candace Van Auken. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. 7:30-8pm.

Sunday

Boston Metro Healing healing group for everyone. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 617/426-920S.

Allston Lesbian volleyball. All skills welcome. Coached drills and scrimmage. West End House, 10S Allston St. 2:30-S:30pm. \$2. Info: Ann 617/S24-4884.

Boston ("Boston's Other Volce," radio for gay/lesbian community, with Peter Stickel. 12/2S Special holiday program. WROR 98.5 FM. 11:30pm.

Boston The Gay Dating Show, WUNR 1600 AM. 11:45pm-3am.

Monday

Boston □ **Alcoholics Together** Les/Gay group holds a free discussion meeting Mon.-Fri. at Gay & Lesbian Health, 180 Cambridge St. 12-1:30pm. Info: 617/227-8353.

Boston

Lesbian and Gay Concert and Marching Band. No auditions. YWCA, 120 Clarendon St. 7:15 p.m. Info: Joe 617/62S-3304, Zoe 617/396-2989.

Providence, RI

ACT-UP/Rhode Island open meetings. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. Info: Bill 617/782-9063.

Roxbury ACT UP/Boston meets to confront the AIDS crisis. Room 34S, Bldg. 3, Roxbury Community College. 7:00pm. Info: 617/49-ACT-UP.

Cambridge

Bisexual Women's Rap. 12/20 Bisexual Women in Popular Culture/Media. 12/27 Being Single/Part of a Couple. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-10pm. Free. Info: 617/3S4-8807 (TTY/voice).

Cambridge

30-plus Lesbian Rap 12/20 Single on the Holidays. 12/27 Taking Risks. 7-8:30pm. The Women's Center

Wednesday

Cambridge ("Say it Sister!" WMBR, 88.1 FM. 7-8pm. 12/21 Lorry Sorgman, pres. of Les/Gay Jewish Congress discusses Int'l Jewish Women's conference in Jerusalem. 12/28 Women talk about the relationships to their breasts and to their bodies in "All about Breasts."

Boston - Women's Self-Defense Classes for women of all ages and abilities. See Sat. listing

Cambridge

Lesbian Al-Anon with childcare. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. Free. Info: 617/3S4-8807 (TTY/voice).

Brookline Boston Committee Determined to Free Sharon Kowalski meets. Boston Self-Help Center, 18 Williston Rd. 7pm. Info: 617/661-0S33.

Cambridge MASS ACT OUT meeting. M.I.T., Building 66, Rm. 126. 7:30pm. Info: 617/661-7737.

Thursday

Cambridge
The Group 12/22 Holiday Party. 12/29 Last Meeting of '88. Walker Memorial, MIT on Memorial Drive. Info: 617/266-1129.

Friday

Worcester \square AIDS Project — Worcester support group for HIV positive, PWAs, PWARCs and supporters. Open to all lesbians and gay men. \$1 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Info: Dana

Boston

Healing group for everyone. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 617/426-9205.

Cambridge Women's Coffeehouse The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm-midnight. Info: 617/3S4-8807 (TTY/voice).

> Calendar compiled by Erik Moore





Marc Almond



Pet Shop Boys Chris Lowe (L) and Neil Tennant (one sings, the other, uh?)

Why I loved Marc Almond from the minute I first read about him

And why the Pet Shop Boys now occupy his place in my heart

The Stars We Are Marc Almond Capitol Records

Introspective Pet Shop Boys EMI-Manhattan

By Christopher Wittke

A lbums by gay guys aimed squarely at the top of the pop charts? You bet! The key is to be subtle on the gender references (if you make them at all) and infectious in the musical hook department. Then you keep your fingers crossed hoping for some airplay and lots of MTV exposure—and if all goes well you dance your way to mainstream success!

I loved Marc Almond from the minute I first read about him in a regular feature of

England's Musical Express circa 1980. Each week in the column called "Portrait of the Artist as a Consumer," a different pop star would list his/her favorite books, magazines, records, films, etc. Almond, then lead singer of a new duo called Soft Cell, (whose music I hadn't even heard) listed several books by John Rechy as his faves. Rechy's The Sexual Outlaw had been a formative book for me, ever since I ripped it off from a hometown bookstore in my early teens (what was I supposed to do, interact with a clerk? I was way too young to be doing "doctoral research") and knew that Rechy was talking about me.

I felt that same sense of connection the more I read about Almond.

By the time Soft Cell's debut album Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret was released in late 1980-early 1981, Almond's voice was supplying the soundtrack of my life. That wonderful album of synthesizer based-pop and Almond's emotive soulful voice (quite the opposite of the robotic Devo/Gary Numan version of synth-pop and a precursor to the multi-platinum success of the Human League) served to usher in the 1980s in a modern, sexually frank way. The songs told the story of a bored suburban guy's odyssey to the city, discovering the world of porno movies, s/m, and care-free sex. (Not to mention that ever-so-gay quest for love in the least likely of places.)

One of the singles from *Non-Stop*, "Tainted Love," was a huge success in the U.S. and the rest of the world. Soft Cell even turned up on *The Merv Griffin Show* while finishing a promotional tour, where the ever-so femme Almond giggled about life at the top of the charts and enthralled Merv as only Merv can be enthralled. In a later interview in the English *NME*, Almond mentioned appearing on that show as a career pinnacle, "It's their Number One chat show," he gushed

chat show," he gushed. Soft Cell went back to England to work on new songs, and not long after that news began to surface about a mysterious cancer that was striking gay men in New York City and San Francisco. In spite of their top of the charts success in Britain (every single they released there was a big success), Almond began to seem disillusioned with the group's popularity. (His partner David Ball rarely gave interviews, seemingly content to compose and perform the music while Miss-Marc-Thing did all of the front work.) As his apparent resentment grew, Almond took to releasing terse announcements along the lines of "We are taking time off from our hectic touring schedule, the pressures of which have forced me into situations which compromise my health...." What it all added up to eventually was the first case of pop star AIDS anxiety, quite similar to feelings I was having at exactly the same time. Truly,

Marc Almond was a star to relate to!

I went into therapy to deal with my AIDS panic; Soft Cell released a couple more LP's (and one very splendid boxed 12 inch remix collection) and then broke up. The epidemic knocked the wind right out of the Soft Cell sails. Almond went on to release a steady stream of solo records, none of which captured my attention because of their selfconscious anti-popularity packaging. I wasn't anywhere near as interested in Almond's skull and crossbones weird-forweirdness'-sake stance as I was in his musical descriptions of seedy, sleazy urban life in the Soft Cell days. Wearing crucifixes upside down for shock value (who cares?) didn't connect to my life in the way Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret had. This was the first time I felt dissatisfied by a commercially successful person's retreat from the formula. I generally support a step towards weirdness and experimentalism. But what Almond and Soft Cell did best was to subvert pop music, to inject radio tunes with a smoldering, illicit sexuality. It seemed as if I would always have to look fondly back on the Soft Cell releases as the Music for the Decade that Wasn't.

But guess what? Marc Almond is back, as fey as ever, with a new album called *The Stars We Are*. A nifty single, "Tears Run Rings" was pre-released several weeks ago and the first time I heard it on the radio I thought, "Hey, this sounds like Soft Cell, I think Marc is really back!"

Well, yes and no. In a decidedly commercial turn, Almond is singing sweet love songs laced with melancholy over mostly synthesized arrangements. The three best songs on the album are the equivalent of Soft Cell filler material (and they had very good filler!). None of it ever comes close to the glorious pop masterpieces of the old days.

"Bitter Sweet" is the best song on the album with its catchy "Let's go to Paradise, Jack" refrain. This is the fastest, dancingest song on the album, but compared to much of the dance music played in late-'80s clubland, it's just the other side of midtem-

"Tears Run Rings" calls Soft Cell to mind, but careful listening reminds you that Continued on page 11

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